

# Ec -Sense

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The Allergy and Environmental Health  
Association of Canada  
Association Allergies Santé et  
Environnement du Canada  
Ottawa



Spring/Summer 1991

## OUR THANKS

### Contributors

Lynda Brooks  
Estelle Drolet  
Johanne Falardeau  
Pat Gorgas  
Ruth Williams

Cover drawing by  
Rebecca Mason

Illustration by  
Lynda Phillips

Production  
Penny Corbin

Editorial Committee  
Chris Brown  
Penny Corbin

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR FALL  
ECO-SENSE IS AUGUST 15TH.**



Please send your newsletter contributions to **Eco-Sense Publisher**, P.O. Box 11428, Station H, Nepean, Ontario K2H 7V1.

If your label reads 9101, 9102, 9103, 9104, 9105, or 9106 you need to renew your membership. Send a \$25 cheque payable to AEHA to :AEHA Membership, P.O. Box 11428, Station H, Nepean, Ont. K2H 7V1.

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*Statistics Canada's 1987 Survey of Volunteer Activity says "at least one out of every four Canadians over the age of 15 is a volunteer for a charitable or non-profit organization... Each volunteer freely chooses to serve the public good with no expectation whatsoever of receiving personal monetary gain. Three character traits distinguish volunteer workers generally: commitment, enthusiasm and caring. In fact, nine out of 10 Canadian volunteers cite four very important reasons they have entered public service: to help others, to help a cause that they believe in, to do something that they like to do, and to feel that they have accomplished something.*

*(Royal Bank Reporter, Spring 1991)*

**Note: Advertisements do not imply that AEHA endorses any particular product or services mentioned therein. Readers with multiple sensitivities are advised to assess products carefully since individual sensitivities may vary.**

## President's Message

Notes from all over:

### AGM

The Annual General Meeting in Sackville went well. Now AEHA has only one head on the body, and it should be a lot easier to co-ordinate efforts on all the things Ed Lowans has said he'd like to move ahead on. One of the first concerns is the development of coherent policy, with input from all who are interested. Not so long ago, Ed mentioned we need to develop positions in areas that are of interest to persons with sensitivities...so let us know how you feel. You can write to the Ottawa Branch, or to National, at Box 871, Cambridge, Ontario N1R 5X9.

### Branch/National Memberships

You might not know it, but there are two ways you can be a member of AEHA. If you really want to take part in branch activities you become a branch member. If you're not interested in taking part in local activities, but would like to support a national organization, the thing to do is to become a national member.

If you don't want to take part (and help) in branch activities, you should indicate this when you renew. I suspect there are many who aren't really interested in branch activities, and it would be better if those people became national members, taking the financial and organizational strain off the local branch.

Of course, if you don't take part in the branch, and if you don't help out, you don't get a local newsletter. I should also mention that if you don't help out there won't be an Ottawa Branch for very much longer.

### Self-help

AEHA is, first and foremost, a self help group. Historically, it has not

provided help to people so much as it has been a means by which people with sensitivities can organize to help themselves. People do not join the executive to provide services to members, but to help members organize to achieve their goals themselves. This is especially true at the branch level, where nothing happens except what is done by members of the branch.

Although there are still attitude problems in the community, times have changed, and changed drastically, over the past decade, and the focus of interest has shifted. Most of the people who take an active involvement in Ottawa are interested in access in the community, to jobs, housing, social services, transportation, and so on. New members continue to be most interested in making the initial lifestyle changes necessary, but older members who have made these changes now want to get on with their lives, and to create the kind of co-operative community necessary to do so.

We now have partners in that activity. Health and Welfare has done a mailing to thousands of doctors, medical associations, and provincial and federal ministries informing them about environmental sensitivities. You can get a copy of the report they sent out from Dr. John Davies, (613) 957-0318.

Others are joining the effort. In May, we were invited to testify at the federal Liberal Task Force on Disabilities. They've agreed to help out. Catherine Frazee, Chief Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission has conveyed our desire for the Ontario government to help with public education. In her letter she says "Given the uniqueness of the public perception and accommodation issues associated with environmental sensitivities, I have also offered our assistance to the Health Minister in

shaping a better public understanding of a disability which is still widely misunderstood".

Here in Ottawa, the Regional Health Unit has agreed to help put together an expression of community accessibility and public health needs of persons with sensitivities. That offer came during National Access Awareness Week, which, for the first time, we were part of.

Just the same, there are still problems. Social services do not understand special needs associated with these problems. We still don't have access to health care. And then there's the Carleton Board of Education!

If you have a problem, consider working with others to solve it. Just overcoming the sense of alienation and isolation will make it worthwhile. And who knows, you might even solve the problem, not just for yourselves, but for others who follow.

There are now many more offers to help than we have people to take advantage of them.

Chris Brown  
Ottawa Branch President  
837-7173

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## CONTACTS

Ottawa Branch President - Chris Brown,  
(613) 837-7173

-represents the local branch in community affairs, co-ordinates local activities.

Vice President - Jim McCulloch, 832-2303

-advises the branch president on activities in the branch, takes over when president not present.

Treasurer - Ruth Williams, 733-3593

-keeps track of financial resources, issues cheques, advises on financial matters.

Publicity - Pat Gorgas, 224-0801

-informs community about branch activities, tracks media coverage.

Parents Committee (School Issues),  
Elizabeth Stutt, 825-8388

-educates local school boards on reasonable accommodation and special education needs, supports parents in dealing with local school boards.

Newsletter Publisher, Penny Corbin,  
225-1462 -publishes newsletter, solicits

advertising, receives articles and information from members and other sources.

Wild Game - Stephane LeCouffe,  
(819) 648-5864

-solicits sources of wild game for organic meat supply to very sensitive members, acquires game when available.

Telephone Committee - Leslirae Rotor,  
830-7968

-co-ordinates team who phone members about meetings and other branch activities, acts as feedback to executive on members concerns.

Tape Librarian - Pat Gorgas, 224-0801

-catalogues and keeps tapes of speakers, media coverage, and other events of interest to members.

Air Cleaner Co-ordinator - Barb Bellin,  
238-2403

-co-ordinates air cleaners owned by branch so that members may try out different types of air cleaners before buying them.

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1

The names of all prescription and non-prescription medicines you are taking.

2

The medicines to which you are allergic.

*Get the answers you need. Ask your doctor or pharmacist:*



The name of the medicine and its purpose.



How and when to take it and for how long.



What foods, drinks, other medicines or activities should be avoided while taking the medicine.



What possible side effects can occur and what to do.



Whether possible side effects could affect your driving performance.



How to store the medicine.

## Report urges 'respect' for environmentally sensitive

Ottawa Branch members will be happy to know the following article ran in the Ottawa Citizen. Tom Spears, Citizen environment writer, had the foresight to pick up on this story nearly a decade ago and he has been following it ever since.

People whose health is affected by everyday pollution must not be "dismissed as neurotic," a major workshop sponsored by Health and Welfare Canada has decided.

The federal department is mailing thousands of copies of a report to doctors across the country urging "respect and support" for patients made ill by substances that don't bother most people.

"Knowledge of environmental sensitivities should be imparted to medical students and to practising physicians," the summary of the medical workshop says.

People with environmental sensitivities suffer a variety of symptoms from exposure to small amounts of common chemicals such as tobacco smoke, perfume, food additives and cleaning products.

The symptoms can range from migraine headaches and nausea to symptoms that resemble mental illness, said Chris Brown, president of the Ottawa chapter of the Allergy and Environmental Health Association. The group has about 300 members in this area who suffer from environmental sensitivities.

Brown said some doctors have refused to recognize environmental sensitivities as a health problem with a physical cause.

"They say we're crackers," he said.

"The biggest problem we face, like many disabled groups, is a lack of understanding in the community."

Many environmentally sensitive people have been put in psychiatric hospitals when their behavior could have been

treated by preventing their exposure to chemicals, he said.

"We're fantastically appreciative" of the report, he said.

The workshop's summary report says patients suffer even more when doctors imply "they are imagining their symptoms, or have some vague, untreatable mental illness."

And it says doctors interested in the problem suffer a "social stigma" in the medical community.

The May 1990 workshop had 48 delegates from the Canadian Medical Association, Health and Welfare, several provincial health ministries, medical schools and major hospitals. Other recommendations included:

- . Setting up a central registry of doctors trained to treat the problem;
- . Ensuring that insurance companies show "no discrimination against environmentally sensitive patients with regard to payment for medication, assistive devices and other illness-related expenses," and
- . Sending more information on the problem to "other groups of doctors besides allergists."

(Ottawa Citizen, April 20, 1991, p. A-6)

*For a copy of Chronic Diseases in Canada Supplement, Environmental Sensitivities Workshop, Ottawa, Ontario, May 24, 1990, ISSN-0228-8699, contact Dr. John W. Davies, Laboratory Centre for Disease Control, Health and Welfare Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. K1A 0L2 (613) 957-0318.*

There were 39 Recommendations in all. Some are mentioned in the Citizen article. Others that may be of interest to our members are:

. Health and Welfare Canada and/or the CPHA should sponsor a national conference on environmental sensitivities, and devise a format for more local awareness-raising seminars.

. GP's should be the frontline workers, referring appropriately to specialists, and then co-ordinating treatment plans.

. A few specialized teams should be developed across the country to act as resources to deal with environmental illness particularly in its severe form.

. Health and Welfare Canada should consult with provincial ministries of health to ensure appropriate medical care is provided to environmentally sensitive patients.

. Disabilities should be rated functionally rather than diagnostically in considering eligibility for pensions/social assistance.

**ALLERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION  
OTTAWA BRANCH**

**STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
DECEMBER 31, 1990**

CASH ON HAND AND IN BANK, JANUARY 1, 1990		\$ 7,237.07
Add: Receipts		
Membership	2,226.30	
Donations	1,625.00	
Advertising	1,686.00	
Sale of Eco-Sense	174.00	
Wild Game Sales	219.00	
Air Cleaner Rentals	110.00	
Workshops (net)	7.50	
Bank interest	414.92	6,462.72
TOTAL RECEIPTS		13,699.79
Less: Disbursements		
Printing & Publishing	3,613.11	
Postage	1,608.82	
Wild Game Expenses	65.20	
Air Cleaner Expenses	95.52	
Telephone, Hall Rentals,		
Special Events, etc.	707.76	
Book Library	225.50	
Tape Library	16.10	
Office Supplies	134.49	
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		6,466.50
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE		539.00
CASH ON HAND AND IN BANK, DECEMBER 31, 1990		\$ 7,772.29

## Branch News

A number of environmental concerns have been included in the specifications for the new Ottawa City Hall construction. Discussions continue towards making City Hall accessible to people with environmental sensitivities.

### WANTED

Do you enjoy meeting people? We need you. The membership chairperson's position needs to be filled. What's involved? A person who pays attention to detail to process new memberships and renewals, to keep a membership list up-to-date, mail kits to new members, send membership cheques to Head Office and mail out renewal notices if required. Our members are very important to us and we need to have a list that is well maintained as it has been in the past. The membership list is also vital to the efficient mailing of the Eco-Sense. If you have administrative skills that you would like to contribute to your local branch, please give Chris a call at 837-7173.

Calling all those who may be interested in researching materials related to allergies and ecological illness. Do you enjoy writing? This newsletter really could use an Editor. No publishing duties are involved. Give Penny a call if you are interested, 225-1462.

If you're interested in getting together over tea for a bit of social chat and at the same time helping to distribute the Eco-Sense call Chris at 837-7173. Time required is only 2 hours every 3 months.

Do you know anyone that could record and distribute minutes of our executive meetings? Call Chris today at 837-7173.

### LIBRARY NEWS

Add this catalogue to your library list - the Product List and prices for Special Foods, 9207 Shotgun Court,

Springfield, Virginia 22153. Karen Slimak, founder of Special Foods, tells the story behind how the foods came to be developed for persons with food allergies or intolerances, chemical sensitivities, or mold allergies and for persons on rotation diets. Ordering information provided and a description of the special processing which avoids chemical contamination and eliminates molds. (Thanks to Johanne Falardeau for providing this catalogue to our library)

### FOR SALE

Zymotrate (120) \$20.50; Ultra-Flav (60) \$11.40; Ultra-Zinc (120) \$14. (Prices include exchange, shipping, duty and tax). Phone Johanne, days, 837-7173.

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# Tap Water:

## How to Conquer the Chlorine Cocktail by Daniel Ray

You fill your glass from your kitchen faucet. It's cloudy and has a slight odor. With a shrug, you drink it anyway. After all it comes from the town's treatment plant. If it wasn't safe, they wouldn't let you drink it. Or would they?

In this article, I will focus on the tremendous problems associated with water that we are faced with today. Also I will cover various methods of water purification. There surely are many opinions on water purification, but I will try to be objective and cover the highlights and shortcomings of the various choices available.

Let us first put water contaminants into perspective. The average adult body is composed of about 40-45 quarts of water. It is present in all our cells and makes up 83% of our blood, 86% of our lungs, 75% of our heart, 74% of our brain, and even 22% of our bones! To replenish what is lost through sweat, elimination, and breathing, water is rapidly and efficiently absorbed along with nearly everything dissolved and contained in it. Some of the pollutants are filtered out in the kidneys and liver and then eliminated. But many accumulate in our tissues and organs, causing both immediate danger and long term health problems.

We have literally hundreds of toxins, heavy metals, poisons, viruses, and other harmful contaminants present in our water supplies. Is it any wonder that America is sick?

### Chlorine is a Poison

Most municipal water treatment plants use chlorine to disinfect water because it is very effective in killing bacteria and its very inexpensive compared to other methods available. However, chlorine can be a deadly killer because

it interacts with humic acid and other natural debris in water to produce trihalomethanes more commonly known as THM's. The most common THM is chloroform and it is suspected of causing several well known degenerative diseases, including cancer.

THM's can be found in most water systems. Some municipal water systems have been found to contain pesticides like TCB and PCB's, phenols, sewage wastes and possibly hundreds of other contaminants. The following list will give us a small sample of some of the ingredients of what I call the "chlorine cocktail".

Aluminum, Ammonium, Arsenic, Benzene, Cadmium, Carbon Tetrachloride, Chlorine, Chromium, DDT, Dioxin, Ethylene Dibromide (EDB), Flouride, Inorganic Minerals, Iron, Lead, Mercury, Nitrates, Nitrites, Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCB), Trichloroethylene (TCE), Trihalomethanes (THM), Various Viruses, Vinyl Chloride.

I hope you can see that our government agencies can't be expected to solve our nations massive water problems, but yet we cannot, and must not ignore them. We must realize the fact that our future health is in our own hands - if we learn to take mastery over our own bodies. We can guard the health of ourselves and our children by choosing an effective method to purify the water we drink and bathe in. We must do this at our homes if we want to build good health and greatly reduce the potential for danger in the coming years.

There are numerous ways to purify water to a certain extent. There are many opinions on which method is the most effective. I would like to briefly cover the major methods of water purification. Let's take a look at some of the options.

### Distillation

In distillation, water is boiled and the resulting steam travels through tubes into another chamber where it condenses, leaving most impurities behind. Everything that does not vaporize at the same temperature as water (hydrogen sulfide, bacteria, minerals and most other impurities) is removed; 99.9 percent of THMs is removed.

Although distillation removes a wide spectrum of impurities, critics point out that no trace minerals are left in the water. They also argue that distilled water may leach minerals from the bones and tissues - especially calcium and phosphorus, causing long term deterioration of teeth and bones.

Proponents of distilled water say this same property reduces the possibility of arthritis, since it combats mineral buildup in the joints. They also argue that people can get all necessary trace minerals from food or mineral supplements. The better distillers use a postfilter (carbon) on the output to trap any residual organics like industrial solvents or herbicides.

- . Distillers need A/C power.
- . Most require a plumber to install and service regularly.
- . Water is not pressurized and requires installation of a separate pump to provide tap-water convenience.
- . Although this process does remove many contaminants from water, *some organic solvents, actually vaporize with the water* and re-condense into the distilled water.
- . Typical home distillation units cost \$400-\$1000 or more.

### Granulated Activated Carbon

Granulated activated carbon (GAC) filters remove sediment, chlorine, organic chemicals, musty and fish odors, and hydrogen sulfide (a chemical that gives water the taste and smell of rotten eggs). Some activated carbon filters attach directly to the faucet or hook

into the cold-water line under the kitchen sink.

A sensible, cost effective and thorough method of removing chlorine, THM's, insecticides, pesticides and other organic chemicals from large amounts of water is through the adsorption principal with highly activated liquid phase granular carbon. This media is a very porous form of carbon, similar in some respects to the structure and properties of graphite. When water passes over and through the carbon, organic chemicals removed by adsorption include dyes, phenolics, PCB's and general classes of aromatics, esters, ethers and detones.

After periods of disuse or after treating large quantities of water, high levels of bacteria can accumulate and contaminate the very water being purified. For activated carbon to be effective, the filter must be changed regularly, or backwashed if unit is so equipped. A Very good method for large amounts of water for short periods of time. Prices vary from \$200 for counter-top units (1/2 gallon per minute) up to \$4700 large home unit (45 gallons per minute) with automatic backwash.

### Compressed Carbon Block Filter

The compressed carbon block (CCB) filter removes all the contaminants that a GAC filter removes. And since the water must go through a solid block of carbon, it catches all the small particles that a GAC filter misses. It does not allow bacteria to go through the block and, test data on the removal of toxic metals such as lead, cadmium, arsenic and mercury by CCB filters are very impressive.

The composite filter combines synthetic polyethylene membranes of different grades, or polyethylene and carbon layers. Composite filters can be used to remove bacteria in low concentrations. The pore size of the membranes (measured in microns) determines the size of the particles removed.

The typical compressed carbon block filter:

- . Requires no power.
- . Does not require a plumber to install it, and it needs no service.
- . It is convenient, pressurized water at the tap.
- . Unlike RO units, it is filtering water gallon for gallon.
- . It prevents "Channelling," impedes bacterial growth and contains no built-in toxin like loose charcoal filters.
- . It supplies filtered water at one-tenth the cost of bottled water and the source of the water is known.
- . It effectively removes or reduces all solvent types of material and chlorine.
- . Costs about \$175 and up.

#### Silver-Impregnated Charcoal Filter

- . Silver is added to charcoal filters to inhibit the growth of bacteria in the filter.
- . It does not help filter out chemical impurities or remove bacteria in the water.
- . Silver is, itself, a toxin. In this filter, the last thing water touches before it fills a glass is silver. If the filter is compromised, a potential exists for silver to enter the drinking water.
- . Prices vary up to \$300.

*This article from Health Freedom News October 1989 is reprinted with permission from The National Health Federation. Watch for the rest of this article which covers Brimac 216 Bone Charcoal, Reverse Osmosis with Carbon, and Bottled Water in our next issue.*

### The Natural Health Care Directory

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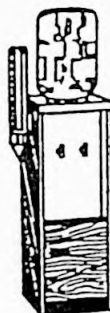
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## Sharing Information

**Promising New Drug for Candida - Diflucan**  
*Information excerpted from an interview with Dr. Charles Resseger, practitioner of allergy-oriented medicine, Norwalk, Ohio and Marjorie Hurt Jones in Mastering Food Allergies #50.*

Approved for used in Spring 1990, now available. New antifungal drug that according to Dr. Resseger, appears to be the most effective - yet safe - way to treat stubborn, longstanding cases of candida overgrowth. Because of potential side effects, nizoral and amphotericin-B haven't been used quite as freely as nystatin. Both can produce serious side effects and must be carefully monitored. Diflucan is not metabolized in the liver and so patients do not have to be monitored with liver function studies. Dr. Resseger has seen no evidence of toxicity even in the most acutely chemically sensitive patients. It is more expensive, \$5-7 per 100 mg tablet but usually works in a month or two and has a long half life. After two weeks of taking one pill a day, a patient can space the pills out to only one every other day.

*[Best to discuss this drug with your doctor and obtain more up-to-date information as to any possible side effects.]*

**Behaviour problems linked to environment**  
 According to Dr. Jeff Phillips, clinical supervisor at North Bay's Concordia Children's Mental Health Centre, children "labelled as having psychological problems" often suffer severe environmental sensitivities that go untreated. He suggests that teachers who have despaired of hyperactive students ask themselves what was going on at the time of unexplained behaviors - hot dog days, chocolate bar sales blitzes, rooms

being painted, roofs being tarred. As long as the effects of diet are ignored, children will continue to suffer mistaken diagnoses that only compound their problems. He lauds the Waterloo County Board of Education for taking heed of the link between environment and behavior. Waterloo has improved the regular classroom environment for children who are not too ill to be integrated and has built "two environmentally clean classrooms for students identified as having more serious environmental sensitivities and learning or behavior problems. In these classrooms, sophisticated air filtration, nontoxic materials, all-wood furniture, and a strict ban on chemicals ensure a hazard-free chance for learning. Not all boards can outfit such rooms right away, but Phillips hopes educators will become informed about environmental dangers. Education Leader/ March 23/1990

Two of our members, Elizabeth Stutt and Virginia Salares are holding off filing a complaint with the Human Rights Commission about the CBE failing to provide reasonable accommodation for their children who are environmentally sensitive. Virginia has been asking the CBE to remove agents in the schools that are harmful to environmentally sensitive children for the past five years. Barbara MacDonald, a communications officer for the CBE said "We take (all complaints) very seriously. We look into every situation and we take each one individually. What may be appropriate in one area may not be appropriate in another area." Chris Brown, President AEHA Ottawa said there are a lot of contradictions in the CBE's position. "Environmentally sensitive children react at levels that other people don't react at. So what the board has done is they've had the air measured in a certain

room and they find that whatever contaminant is the issue is within acceptable levels. And they say it's within acceptable levels, therefore there's no problem. But previous to that, they acknowledged that environmentally sensitive kids react at acceptable levels."

The Clarion Vol. 33 - Number 2 - March 19, 1991.

Chronic fatigue is often a symptom of Environmental Sensitivity and environmental and food sensitivities may sometimes be symptoms of **Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME)**, also called Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, an immune dysfunction disease. MESH Ottawa is the M.E. Self Help group. They have a telephone information and support network and also hold regular meetings. They can be reached at 789-MESH or MESH, Hintonburg Community Centre, 1064 Wellington, Ottawa, K1Y 2Y3. (Thanks to Joan Eddis for passing this information along)

**100% cotton drapes** are available at Miss Grimble's, 43 Flora Street, Ottawa, Ontario. K2P 1A7 (232-7743) (Information supplied by Pat Gorgas)

J.P. Stevens **100% cotton sheets** are available at 45% savings (white sale, April 14/91) at Brass Bed Sleep Centre, 225 Bank St. or 194 Robertson Road. Call ahead to see if there are any left and to check prices. (Thanks to Estelle Drolet for answering the inquiry in our Winter/91 Eco-Sense)

All natural **100% cotton duvet**, 200 threads per sq. inch cotton percale cover, channel-quilted to a high density cotton thermal layer. Pre-shrunk. Ecru. Available only through Sears Summer 1991 Catalogue p.A229. Twin \$74.70, Double \$93.37, Queen \$112.42, King \$131.13. Save \$20 - \$40 until July 2, 1991. (Estelle Drolet)

**Killer caffeine now known to kill household dust mites.** It is considered a naturally occurring insecticide which may be used to treat carpets, mattresses and pillow stuffings in the future. This information is based on a study performed by the Division of Allergy and Immunology of the University of South Florida Health Sciences Centre which showed that after 8 weeks most of the mites treated with caffeine had died, and allergy-producing substances made by the mites were drastically reduced. (Ottawa Citizen, Feb 3/91) (Sent in by Estelle)

**Consumers allergic to sulphites** are warned by the federal Health Department not to consume various aloe vera drinks and gels. The products implicated are Nature's Secret aloe vera gel and Nature's Secret aloe vera drinks, distributed by Maximum Nutrition Ltd. of Scarborough, Ont; Premium 99.6% aloe vera gel and Premium 99.7% aloe vera juice, distributed by Vita Health Co. Ltd. of Winnipeg; and Quest aloe vera drink and Quest aloe vera gel, distributed by Quest Vitamin Supplies Ltd. of Vancouver. The products, distributed Canada-wide, are considered a health risk for only those individuals with an allergy to sulphites. (AEHA Waterloo-Wellington, source: Cambridge Reporter, Jan. 12, 1991)

**Sensitive to your toothpaste?** Apparently plaque-fighting toothpastes contain cinnamonaldehyde, a flavourant, to cover the taste of pyrophosphate which inhibits plaque calcification. A British study showed 70% of those with reactions (oral lesions, gum sores, etc.) reacted to cinnamonaldehyde but none of the other components of the toothpaste. Tartar control toothpastes also have been found responsible for a rash around the mouth and at the corner of the lips. And the New England Journal of medicine identified a woman whose asthma worsened after using tartar control toothpaste. (Allergy Quarterly, Vol 27, Winter '91 from Dentaletter, Apr 1990, Vol 7, No.15.)

## How's the air in your house?

Excerpts from an article in the Homes section of The Calgary Sun, April 18, 1991.

KELOWNA, B.C. (CP) .....David Hughes of Vital Systems, an expert on inside air pollution, and his partner, Stephen Collens, a gasfitter and plumber, say gases given off by many modern products may make indoor breathing hazardous to residents' health.

Volatile gases from new furniture, carpeting, plywood, particle board, space heaters, paints, glues, dyes, rubber, gas furnaces, permanent-press sheets and a myriad of cleaning products used daily in the home can raise contaminant levels through the roof.

Inhaling these contaminants has been linked to severe allergic reactions, headaches, fatigue, balance problems, nervous disorders - even some cancers.

Hughes, an associate of the Royal Institute of Public Health and Hygiene in London, England, says there's a movement afoot in North America to make homes and buildings safer.

In Washington State, for example, new regulations require a 90-day "flush-out" period after construction of all state-owned buildings to allow gases given off by new materials to escape before the building is used. Carpeting must be in place 30 days before the furniture arrives to prevent off-gases from broadloom accumulating in the furniture. Ventilating systems pump at full capacity for three months before the first civil servant sets up a desk. Canada, says Hughes, has no such regulations....

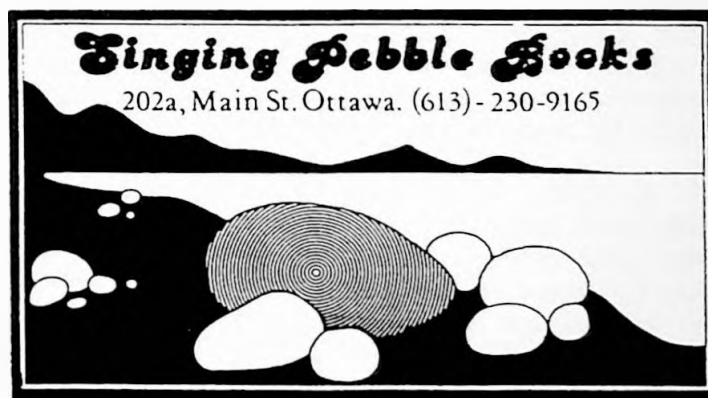
Vital Systems tests homes for air and water quality and offers devices and products to help correct health hazards in the home. The inexpensive test checks for radon gas, electromagnetic fields, fumes from hazardous cleaners, paint, chemical products and contaminants in the water. It also examines water conservation methods.

Because furnaces are often a source of toxic fumes, the test includes inspection of the heating system including fuel intake, furnace, filters and ductwork.

Urea formaldehyde foam insulation received lots of bad press years ago when it was discovered the material breaks down, emitting an irritating gas. Its sale as an insulator has been banned, but, says Hughes, urea formaldehyde is still pervasive in the modern home.

Used in particle board, some plywoods and even as sizing for permanent-press sheets, it's still one of the most common health threats in the home. Though some doctors claim it's safe, urea formaldehyde has been blamed for causing irritation of the throat and nasal membranes, and has been implicated in some cancers.

The Vital Systems catalogue offers water and air filtration systems, non-toxic paints, solvents, and varnishes - and cosmetics for allergic or environmentally sensitive people.





## Pain Avoidance vs. Pleasure Seeking

by Lynda Brooks

Which do you do in your life? Many of us have spent most of our lives making decisions by looking at which decision will give us the least amount of pain.

Animals and young children on the other hand make their decisions by looking at how much pleasure they will receive from what they do. This is why children can get themselves into trouble. It is also the reason that they can't tell you why they did what they did.

Picture a young child sitting and playing in their dinner. They have food in their mouths, on their tray, squeezed between their hands, etc. The child becomes totally submersed in the joy of tasting, feeling, smelling, and seeing the food. It does not occur to the child that Mom will get upset because there is a mess. The child might look at Mom and say "why doesn't she join in on the fun?". When the child is punished the message that they receive is - you don't get pleasure from your food. You better eat like a good little boy or girl or you'll have an unpleasant experience.

When this is reinforced through enough experiences the child stops doing pleasurable things and starts to make their decisions by saying "what consequences will I have to pay?" "Is the pain worth the pleasure?" If the negative consequences continue to outweigh the pleasure, then all decisions will be made strictly to avoid pain.

We stop exercising because we will feel the pain in our muscles. We ignore the fact that feeling better in the long run by exercising will outweigh any pain we experience.

We avoid arguments because of the pain we feel. We forget the resentments will

continue to build and in the long run will cause more pain.

We tell ourselves that we are bad or that we'll get fat, etc. if we eat foods that taste good. We don't allow ourselves to enjoy the pleasure of the food. What do you think happens if you eat these good foods. Is it possible that the conflicting messages compromise your immune system? I believe Psychoneuroimmunology would support this theory. One message is that this is good for you and the other message is no or you shouldn't be enjoying this and if you are there will be consequences to pay.

We become workaholics telling ourselves that we totally enjoy running ourselves into the ground. After all we are avoiding the pain of being told that we are lazy, of not having things, of being unsuccessful, etc.

Those of us with E.I. become so used to fighting the perceived invaders in our lives that we give little or no time to looking to the pleasures. We constantly look or are on guard for those things we can't tolerate and are monitoring for the consequences of what we do do that we forget to get in the moment and enjoy those pleasures we do have.

Many of us come from backgrounds of pain - be it a single parent family, a non-communicative family, an addictive background, an abusive family. We are often told those things we do wrong or can't do instead of having what we can do reinforced. We will do anything to do things right so that we can feel good. But often, no matter how we try, we do not get positive reinforcement.



Even the body works towards avoiding pain instead of seeking pleasure. Unfortunately after years of being on guard we end up with tired systems which function erratically. Tired adrenals, thyroid glands, etc. even though they continue to try to overact.

How then can we change? How do we know what is pleasurable? I would suggest we start to monitor our feelings.

What feels good? What promotes happiness? What helps us to feel energized when we do it for a long time? What gives us long-term, long-lasting benefits? This can take time. Because it can take time we often fall back into our old patterns because change can be painful and we want to avoid pain.

Once we do invest in ourselves and our happiness life can become pleasurable. Enjoy your pursuit of happiness.



### Book Review

**The Allergy Diet , How to Overcome Your Food Intolerance** by Elizabeth Workman, SRD, John Hunter, MD, Virginia Alun Jones, MD, Prentice-Hall Canada Inc., 1985, ISBN 0-13-022450, Soft-cover.

This book provides the reader a simple approach to suspected food allergies or sensitivities and an exclusion diet that avoids commonly offending foods. Besides 150 recipes which are identified for the exclusion diet, there are wheat free, milk free, and egg free recipes. Recipes cover breakfast beverages, appetizers and soups, salads and vegetables, vegetarian dishes, snacks, fish, meat, poultry, game, stocks, batters, sauces, salad dressings, bread, pastry, cakes, crackers, cookies, fruits and desserts. Measurements are given in both metric and lb/cup/spoon.

It is worth reading for the excellent 38 page introduction alone. The introduction explains in an easy to understand way, what allergy is, how foods produce disease and which conditions are caused by food intolerance. The UK Cambridge team has found the following conditions to often be caused by intolerance to certain foods and are treated by a diet: irritable bowel syndrome, migraine, asthma, rhinitis, gluten-sensitive enteropathy, eczema, urticaria and cow's milk sensitive enteropathy. An exclusion diet is included to detect food intolerances.

### Lawn Care

Some of the tips for non-toxic lawn care given by Bill Bitz of Garden Landscapes at the February 1991 general meeting of AEHA Ottawa.

**Mow High** - Set your mower at 2 1/2" - 3". This may seem quite high but it is important for a number of reasons. More grass blade provides more photosynthetic

area and then it is easier for the plant to manufacture it's "food". Germinating weed seedlings will be shaded out and the turf tends to stay healthy in times of drought.

**Aerate** - Aeration is the removal of plugs of earth which are deposited on top of the lawn. This improves air exchange and allows for easier penetration of water. Sandy soils may not need aeration and heavier clay soils could be aerated once a month. Most residential lawns require aeration once a year. You can rent an aerator at most rental outlets. Some landscaping companies offer custom aeration with a machine that will do a superior job. There is also a hand tool available at some garden centres if you have a small lawn.

**Top-Dressing** - Top-dressing involves spreading a thin (1/4") layer of rich soil or compost on top of the lawn. It is often done in conjunction with overseeding with an appropriate seed mix. Good results are obtained when this is done immediately after aerating. To top-dress, place a comfortable amount in a pail or on a shovel, and flick the material out as if you are feeding chickens.

**Watering** - Water properly during times of drought to maintain a healthy lawn. Keep in mind that most turf goes somewhat dormant in times of drought. In the Ottawa area, turf will rarely die from a lack of water. However, proper watering will keep it healthier and looking better. Water deeply, once or twice a week, during dry spells. You can usually leave your sprinkler on one area for about two hours, but this depends on your soil. The idea is to get the water to soak into the soil to encourage deep root growth. If you move the sprinkler too often, water stays near the surface and the roots do as well. (Canadian Organic Growers Reference Series RS 3/89)

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One of the purposes of The **ALLERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION** is to promote the free exchange of information on the prevention and treatment of environmental hypersensitivities. People who are environmentally hypersensitive are no longer able to adapt well to common and increasing exposures in their everyday environment.

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Membership in the **AEHA** includes a subscription to **ECO-SENSE**, the newsletter of the Ottawa Branch, and to The **A.E.H.A. Quarterly**, from the National Office. Each is produced four times a year. The cost of an annual membership and subscription is \$25.

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